

Antrim Coast & Glens View

The Newsletter for the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Chairman's View

Welcome to the ninth issue of the Antrim Coast & Glens AONB newsletter.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness of sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The Antrim Coast & Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty hosts an interesting and intriguing array of forests and woodlands including: the ancient Oakwood and National Nature Reserve, Breen Wood; Ballypatrick Forest; Ballyboley Forest; Glenariff Forest; Ballycastle Forest; Slievanorra Forest; Glenarm Forest; Cleggan Forest; Capanagh Forest, the list goes on. As part of the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust's raising awareness programme the Trust will liaise with Forest Service, Ulster Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust to promote forest activities and grant schemes on their website.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Marion Woodburn on becoming the first Économusée artisan in the UK.



Joe McFadden,
Chairman AC&G AONB
Management Group



International Year of Forests History of Irish woods



Today, only six per cent of Northern Ireland is woodland, less than anywhere else in Europe, with the exception of Iceland. Most of this is recent conifer plantation.

After the last ice age, Ireland was colonised gradually by trees, beginning with juniper, dwarf willow and birch. By 8,500 years ago, Northern Ireland was covered with a lush "wildwood" dominated by oak and elm, with hazel, Scots pine, alder, ash and yew.

Clearance began with the first farmers who arrived in the Neolithic period, around 6000 years ago. The mild climate and fertile land enabled year-round grazing, and replacement of woodland with farms continued apace until, by the Iron Age, the landscape was an open one with scattered woodland. Ancient Irish laws, first written down in the 7th to

9th centuries, show that woods were protected and managed, most likely by coppicing. Little evidence remains today of this traditional management, but this is probably due to the massive changes that occurred from the 17th century onwards.

By 1600, Ireland had only two to three per cent woodland cover, and was one-third as wooded as England. During the Plantation period, from 1600 onwards, huge areas of land were transferred to Scots and English "planters" or settlers. Accounts from around 1600 describe large stretches of native woodland remaining, but by the early 19th century, when the

first Ordnance Survey maps were produced for Ulster, no more than one-tenth of this woodland remained.

There are reports of timber being felled for building Plantation houses and towns, to fuel ironworks, or to remove hiding places for wolves and "woodkerne," the name for the dispossessed Irish. It is likely, though, that a major cause of woodland loss was the population expansion that occurred in the 18th century. Many woods, once they had been exploited, were probably grubbed out for farming, even in relatively inhospitable areas.

(continued on next page)



At the same time, the new landowners, keen to make their mark, developed their great houses, and around them designed landscapes of parkland and ornamental woodland. In some cases these incorporated existing areas of native woodland, but in many they did not. Planting was encouraged by the Dublin Society, with prizes for chosen species. As time went on, the trend moved away from native species like oak, towards exotics.

The 20th century brought modern forestry. Many ancient woods were felled and replanted with fast-growing conifers, with devastating consequences.

The reserve is the largest area of semi-natural woodland remaining in the Antrim region, and has a wide variety of species owing to variation in soils from strongly acidic to base-rich



Damage caused by felling and clearance, the shade cast by the conifers, and smothering effects of deep layers of needles, have all taken their toll on the vulnerable remnant communities of ancient woodland plants and animals in these woods.

www.woodlandtrust.org

A word of caution if you are walking through the local forests be aware of Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora ramorum*) which has a potential to attack a wide range of woody plants and could cause significant damage to woodland and other habitat if it were to become established. As the disease can easily spread, especially on footwear, the public is advised to stay on the main paths, not take plant cuttings and keep dogs on leads.

For more information visit: www.dardni.gov.uk/forestservice

Glenarm Forest

The distinct Glenarm Estate which runs along the Glenarm River has a long history. There has been a castle in Glenarm since 1260, and the present castle was built by 1636. Woodland was shown here on maps from the 1650s, and remarkably woodland remains in the exact same shape and location today, over 350 years later. Maps from the 1700s show that this area has been continuously wooded. Accounts from newspapers in the 1750s and the Ordnance Survey Memoirs in the 1830s tell that this wood was regularly cut for timber but not completely cleared.

At the northern end is Glenarm Forest, managed by Forest Service, and accessible from the village, with a good network of footpaths. In May these mixed woods are filled with the pungent scent of wild garlic, and bluebells, primrose and opposite-leaved golden saxifrage are also found.

Further up the valley is an area managed by Ulster Wildlife Trust on behalf of the estate, containing semi-natural oak woodland and coppiced hazel woodland. Part of the hazel wood is being coppiced in an effort to return to traditional woodland management, and to encourage such bird species as wood warbler as well as various butterfly species. The reserve is the largest area of semi-natural woodland remaining in the Antrim region, and has a wide variety of species owing to variation in soils from strongly acidic to base-rich. Unusual species found here include bird cherry, wood crane's-bill, intermediate wintergreen, and bird's-nest orchid. This area is only open to UWT members.

www.woodlandtrust.org

UK's First ÉCONOMUSÉE



An ÉCONOMUSÉE is a Québec inspired tourism initiative that encourages visitors to meet an artisan in their workshop and learn about the history of their craft.

ÉCONOMUSÉES, which are self-financed through the sale of their products, make an innovative contribution to the cultural tourism sector.

Marion Woodburn's Jewellery workshop in Galgorm was officially launched on the 24th February 2011 as the UK's first ÉCONOMUSÉE by the Minister for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Arlene Foster.

The launch was attended by key representatives including members from The ÉCONOMUSÉE Society Network in Québec and the Québec Government Office in London.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister said:

"The establishment of the UK's first ÉCONOMUSÉE in Ballymena is a welcome step, as it will encourage visitors to go beyond the Giant's Causeway and explore other areas along the Causeway Coastal Route. It will also give tourists another tangible reason to stop and spend money in the area."

Founded in 2005 by Marion Woodburn. Marion has a BA Hons in Silversmithing and Goldsmithing Jewellery Design and has worked for 5 years at a jewellery workshop before setting up a business and supplying galleries in England with her designs. She then decided to sell directly to consumers with a new workshop in Galgorm to provide increased tourism opportunities.

Much of Marion's work is inspired by the rural landscape which surrounds her, which includes the spectacular Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Sarah Irwin from the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust, the organisation responsible for the development of the ÉCONOMUSÉE project in the area, has travelled with Marion to Québec in Canada to meet with the founders of ÉCONOMUSÉE and to investigate other businesses that have benefited from the network.

Sarah is currently working with Micheal Scullion of Scullion Hurls in Loughguile who is expected to become an Économusée in 2012. If you are interested in finding out more about the network or if you would like to consider becoming an Économusée the criteria are:

- be a private business in operation for more than three years;
- use a traditional technique or know-how to craft one's products;
- make products of recognised quality;
- have the ability and the desire to innovate in one's production;
- operate throughout the entire year and be open to the public for at least four months a year, or accept to be open to the public for at least four months a year;
- generate a turnover of more than forty-six thousand pounds sterling (£46,000) a year;
- show keen interest in welcoming visitors;
- be located on or near a previously identified tourist route or a tourist route under development;
- operate in buildings having the required space for setting up an Économusée and welcome visitors, or intend to acquire the required space;
- operate on a site and in buildings of high quality.

For more information visit
www.ccght.org/sustainable-tourism/

Heart of the Glens project 2011

A new funding application has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Landscape Partnership Scheme for the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. If the application is successful the project entitled the Heart of the Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme will aim to deliver a portfolio of smaller projects, which together will provide

long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for the nine glens. The two million pound project aims to protect and enhance the distinctive built and natural heritage features that contribute to the special character of the Glens. Funding decisions are expected to be made in summer 2011.



Red Squirrel

Over the last few months the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust has provided assistance and funding to the Glens Red Squirrel Group to develop a Red Squirrel Safari in the Glens. The idea of the safari is to encourage visitors and locals to get out and about in the glens and learn about their unique wildlife. The project will allow the development of story boards as well as leaflets, which would provide information about the red squirrel habitats and how to spot evidence of where squirrels have been eating. The project will also enable local people and visitors to assist in monitoring and looking after this special mammal. The Glens are one of the few remaining places in Northern Ireland where population of Red Squirrel are stronger than the invasive Grey Squirrel.

The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is also working on a Butterfly Safari on the Causeway Coast in partnership with the Butterfly Conservation NI.

Red Grouse

The red grouse, one of Northern Ireland's rarest

game birds, has been saved from dying out in a remote upland area of County Antrim. Down to just six pairs, a grouse regeneration project at the Department of Agriculture's Glenwherry farm has involved culling hundreds of foxes and crows, as well as regenerating the heather grazing. (Source: bbc.co.uk)

The male red grouse is a stocky, plump game bird whose plumage varies from orange marmalade to purplish-black. It has obvious crimson red wattles over the eyes and in winter can show white flecking throughout the plumage. The female is cryptically coloured to blend in with the heathery habitat. (Source: habitas.org.uk)



Antrim Coast & Glens AONB Management Group (est. 2004) Who's who?

Rachel Bain AONB Officer, CCGHT

Rachel Bain, AONB Officer from November 2009 to December 2010, has commenced a new post with Coleraine, Ballymoney and Limavady Borough Councils as Biodiversity Officer. A new AONB is due to be appointed shortly.

Cllr Price McConaghy, Moyle District Council



Andrew Price McConaghy MBE is currently Chairman of Moyle District Council. Councillor McConaghy is the longest serving Councillor in Northern Ireland

and is now in his 54th year in local government. He has an interest in all aspects of education, library service and tourism. His hobbies include DIY, travel and watching sports. Price is due to retire from the Council in 2011. CCGHT would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr McConaghy for his support and wish him a long and happy retirement.

Ald Hubert Nicholl, Ballymena Borough Council



Alderman Hubert Nicholl has been a member of Ballymena Borough Council for over 25 years. Hubert's environmental

experience and environmental management has been gained from being a farmer for over 50 years.



2011 European Year of Volunteers



Young volunteers making a clean sweep of the beach



European Year of Volunteering 2011



The efforts of the many thousands of volunteering organisations make a huge difference to our lives in countless ways. The world would be much worse off without volunteers!
www.europa.eu

As part of the 2011 EYV celebrations the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is recruiting a small band of volunteers to assist us with promoting and protecting the landscape. If you are a keen environmentalist and would be interested in carrying out a range of practical work on sites, or taking part in walks and talks in the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contact the CCGHT office for an application pack at info@ccght.org

SAVE THE NEWSLETTER!

This publication has been produced to inform local people, visitors and businesses of projects undertaken by the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT) to enhance and promote the unique beauty and heritage of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

We liaise with landowners, stakeholders, local authorities, tourism and community sectors to produce up to date information on the management of protected areas, projects within the area, issues that impact the landscape, historical, geographical and ecological facts, events and competitions. If you value your AONB newsletter and you want to ensure that the publication continues visit: www.surveymonkey.com/s/QDRQKZY to complete a 5 minute survey. Alternatively contact CCGHT office to complete the survey by email (info@ccght.org) or by phone on: (028) 20752100

All completed surveys received before 30th June 2011 will be entered in a Prize Draw for a Canon SLR Camera, Case and Memory Card bundle





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Sustainable Tourism Conference

As part of the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust's drive to promote and enhance the area we intend to host a Sustainable Tourism Conference in October/November 2011.

Local tourism enterprises will be encouraged to showcase their products and learn how to make their business more sustainable and economically viable. The Trust has also applied for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas for the three AONBs. The aim of the Charter's projects and activities is

the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the continuous improvement of tourism in the protected area in terms of the environment, local population and businesses as well as visitors. The Trust hopes to achieve the Charter status in October 2011.

Visit CCGHT's newly refurbished website which features ...



a Learning Zone, Facts and Information on the 3 North Coast AONBs, Our Heritage, Image and Publication Libraries and links to the new CCR Alive website.

ccght.org



Competition



Slemish Mountain is an extinct volcanic plug that dominates the landscape around Ballymena. Slemish or Sliabh Mis meaning the hill of Mis, [Mis is a female Irish-Gaelic name] is closely associated with the legend of St Patrick, whom it is said, herded sheep and pigs on the mountain as a young slave herdsman circa 400AD. Ballymena Borough Council celebrates St Patrick's Day on the 17th March annually with a popular hiking pilgrimage to the summit.

Marion Woodburn grew up in Broughshane, at the foot of Slemish. Her jewellery designs have been strongly influenced by her surroundings and the culture

of the area.

To win a handcrafted pin from Marion's Slemish Collection forward (by email) a good quality digital photograph taken within the Antrim Coast & Glens Area of Outstanding Beauty to the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust before 1st June 2011. carole@ccght.org The photograph should feature the natural, cultural or built heritage of the area and should demonstrate what makes this area so outstanding. The competition is open to all age groups.

A maximum of 5 images per person. Judging will take place on the 30th June 2011.

Antrim Coast & Glens AONB

Fact File:

Date Of Designation **1988** Area **70600 ha**

www.ccght.org

Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust

For more information on the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB please check the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust website:

www.ccght.org

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Photograph credits: Broughshane Primary School, Picture This! - Daniel McAfee, Glens Red Squirrel Group - Kevin McAuley Photography - Darol O'Kane

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust provides a secretariat service for the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Management Group. The Trust is grateful for support from the following organisations:



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